5. Betrothal and Marriage

584 If the young man has not made his choice, the father draws his attention to such and such a girl whom he would like to have as a daughter-in-law, after having made sure of her father's approval and agreed with him on the date of the official betrothal (gusaba umugeni, lit., to ask a girl in marriage).

On the appointed day he returns to the home of the girl's parents accompanied by one or two clients (3) carrying a new hoe and

3. One of his relatives among the Bahutu.

a jug of hydromel and leading a cow [25] called y'ilembo (lit., in order to enter the rugo). He is let into the rugo. The young man's father and the girl's father, as well as his brothers and brothers-in-law, sit on mats, drink, smoke and talk of this and that. Meanwhile, the mother and the girl keep themselves hidden in a near-by nook and follow the conversation eagerly.

After this preamble which is merely a distraction, the talk turns to the marriage. This often gives rise to a lively discussion during which each of the parties defends his interests. When agreement is finally reached, the father says: "we give you our daughter, but the cow is not fine enough (1); bring us some others." An umugaragu is

1. Even if the animal is magnificent.

then ordered to bring seven other cows to complete the umunani (2)

2. As we have seen above (cf. Dowry) the girl's father nowadays only keeps one out of the two cows for himself.

and to ask the girl's parents for their approval as to the date of the wedding.

● [834] Sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden to the betrothed.

The wedding usually takes place at the home of the young 585 man's father (3).

3. The marriage ceremonies have been

837 606 607 Up until recent times, the father-in-law and even the brothers-in-law had the right to spend one or several nights with the wife of his son or brother. The father-in-law had the right to claim this right without discussion, while the brothers-in-law had to have the brother's permission. The wife who refused to share her bed with her father-in-law or one of her brothers-in-law could be driven away. The husband even had the right to compel his wife to give her favors to one of his friends.

CHAPTER III. DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

1. Death

765 Two days after a death, the whole clan arrives to assist the widow and orphans in their mourning. The mother and her children shave off their hair, take off their bracelets, and abstain from washing their clothes (kwirabura, lit., to become black). One of the brothers of the deceased lights a fire that burns in the rugo without cease for two days (igitshaniro). When it has gone out, the children and their uncle take the ashes and go in secret to throw them in a marsh.

[834] Mourning lasts for two months during which time the married sons may not have intercourse with their wives.

On the first day of the third month the members of the family return. In the evening they all assemble, swallow [32] great quantities of beer, and sing happily (kwera, lit., to become white). The brother of the deceased who took charge of the igitshaniro, or in his absence, another brother, must share the bed of the widow (kweza). The married sons, in the order of their birth, simulate the sexual act with their wives.

The following day, the widow and the wives of the married sons put milk in the churns and make butter (1). Then all the members of

1. During the mourning they could not touch the churns. A stranger to the family of the deceased came and made the butter.

the family rub themselves with chalk, put on white garments, and go

805 In katumba the people begin burning off the grass on the
221 hills.

Most of the weddings take place in nseri, because much beer can be brewed in this month. For the same reason, most fights occur then.

132 There are three seasons in Kissaka.

805 [296] I. Itumba, the great rainy season extending from March to May.

II. Ichanda, the great dry season from June to October.

III. Ruhira, the secondary rainy season from November to January and sometimes February.

The secondary dry season in February does not seem to have a special name.

805 Father C. Lecoindre told me that he had the impression there were 13 months in the Ruanda year and pointed out that on my list the month of kashantare between mutarama and werurwe was not shown.

The art of chronology is only slightly developed in Ruanda, and the Bahutu seem essentially to know only the periods for certain field chores, to which they give special names, for example:

Itumba ya massaka (in the autumn),
Itumba lyi bishimbo,

or solar time:

Rugaryi (little sun),
Itsi (big sun).

644 On the other hand, life in Musinga's royal residence, at
805 least the arrival of fresh drum guards with the new moon, is regulated by the lunar division of the year, and Father C. Lecoindre's observation seems to have many points in its favor. For example, it is said that at the court of the king there is mourning during the
● [834] first half of the month kichurasi. During this time men allegedly have no sexual intercourse with women. The drums at the king's court are beaten only once around 11 o'clock to greet (ndamutsu) the king; they are said to be tied up (kuzirika). The Batwa do not entertain the king with their songs during the evening gatherings. The king pronounces no sentences and accepts no presents. At ordinary law proceedings the victorious party neither sings his song

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physiological aspect of sexuality. They do not seem to have thought of sexual relations as the fulfilment of a romantic love between two individuals meant to mate with each other and nobody else. The way spouses were chosen by the two patrilineages prevented any such ideas, for the choosing of spouses rested on the assumption that any boy and any girl of the right age and reasonably attractive could be good partners in marriage and sexuality. But feelings of sympathy and affection developed later as a result of their life together rather than as its basis. According to our informants, love, in the sense of attractiveness based on individual characteristics, was greater in non-marital relations. 'One slept with a certain woman to make her happy because one liked her,' I was told.

Various prohibitions and obligations indicate how sexuality in marriage was related to events concerning the community and the patrilineage. During the mourning period for the husband's father and mother, which lasted one, two or three months according to the region, intercourse was prohibited for both husband and wife. It was also prohibited for one moon after the death of the wife's child, and for two or three moons for the surviving spouse when one of the spouses died. The meaning of this taboo was not only that one had to refrain from enjoying oneself when one should have been in sorrow. It meant also a certain symbolic participation in death or in the diminution of life affecting the patrilineage. This is, I think, what informants have in mind when they say in this connexion that sex is a sacred activity. This interpretation seems to be supported by what happened when a king died. Not only had all Ruanda to be continent for a certain period (some informants said two moons, others one year), but the bulls were separated from cows and rams from sheep. The king (*mwami*) was identified with Ruanda. If he was strong, Ruanda was strong, if he was getting old and weak, he had to commit suicide because he endangered the country's life. In that context, if animals were prevented from mating it was to express symbolically the idea of the death of the community rather than, it seems, to deny them pleasure.

On the other hand, intercourse was obligatory when events fortunate for the patrilineage or the community at large occurred. For instance when a new hut was occupied, when six days had passed after the birth of a child, when the first teeth of the baby